

is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, if you want to see a shutdown of Government occur again, then please ignore what I have to say for the next 5 minutes. I have been struggling for a long time now to convince the Congress that we ought to engage in a proposal which would end the prospect of Government shutdown forever. We can do it very easily.

Each of the proposals that I have offered to the Congress since 1989 has encompassed this concept, Mr. Speaker, that if at the end of the fiscal year, which is now looming upon us again as September 30, the appropriations bills have not been passed, then automatically the next day those appropriations bills that have not been passed shall automatically be passed, by virtue of instant replay, by adopting last year's numbers. That would mean that never again would we ever have a Government shutdown.

Now, what does this mean in practical terms? It means that the negotiators for the unfinished business of the Congress can continue to work on a full budget or to complete those appropriations bills, but in the meantime we would not have the chaos, unemployment, uncertainty, confusion, embarrassment and all the other negatives that accompany the shutdown of Government.

I believe that President Clinton should have signed the appropriations bills last time around, which would have prevented the Government shutdown, but it did not happen that way. But if you passed my legislation, neither the President nor the Congress would be at sword's end to force a Government shutdown.

Now, what happens if after the fiscal year is over and my bill comes into play and already there is a continuing appropriation, shall we say? That does not prevent even the establishment of a new temporary funding like a continuing resolution by the negotiators. So we have the best of all worlds. Nothing would be stopped by the proposal that I am setting forth here today. Only Government shutdown would be prevented.

I remember and many of us do that in the winter of 1990, in December 1990, as our young people, 500,000 strong, were amassing their strength in Saudi Arabia, poised to do battle to free Kuwait in Desert Shield, as it was then known, we had the embarrassment of the Government of the United States, the patrons of those valiant young people, the Government in back of those valiant youngsters, shut down here in Washington. They were in Saudi Arabia without a country. They technically had no Government back home because the Government had shut down.

That was solved, fortunately, in time for Desert Storm, so we were a country when we effected the assault on Kuwait later on. But is that not a historical

note that should bring shame on American citizens and especially on Members of Congress, that Government should shut down in the middle of hostilities?

That is just one example. Add to that the chaos in which Federal employees were put, the impossibility of getting a passport, of having national parks shut down, 100 other ills that have been brought to the floor of the House in anecdote after anecdote by both Republicans and Democrats as they followed the effects of the Government shutdown.

We have now introduced, I am ready to introduce the newest version, the latest version of my bill which we called the Government Shutdown Prevention Act. This one has several cosponsors. It follows the track of all the legislation that I have heretofore introduced. All of them, this one included, would prevent Government shutdown forever. I cannot say it enough. That is so important.

This has the added feature of saying that when the appropriations cycle ends and there is no new appropriations, then it would revert to last year's lowest number or the House-passed version or the Senate-passed version, and then you take only 75 percent of that. So 75 percent of those levels would pass automatically into law, continuing the flow of Government and allowing the appropriators and the negotiators to deal with the continuing appropriations and the balance of the budget.

I urge consideration by every Member of this legislation and invite their cosponsorship. Prevent Government shutdown.

JUNETEENTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Michigan [Miss COLLINS] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Miss COLLINS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill that will recognize the significance of the oldest black celebration in American history, June 19—known affectionately as "Juneteenth." This bill would recognize Juneteenth as the day of celebrating the end of slavery in the United States and as the true day of independence for African-Americans in this country.

Juneteenth is the traditional celebration of the day on which the last slaves in America were freed. Although slavery was officially abolished in 1863, news of freedom did not spread to all slaves for another 2½ years—June 19, 1865. On that day, U.S. General Gordon Granger, along with a regiment of Union Army soldiers, rode into Galveston, TX, and announced that the State's 200,000 slaves were free. Vowing to never forget the date, the former slaves coined a nickname for their cause of celebration—a blend of the words "June" and "nineteenth."

June 19, 1865, has been traditionally associated with the end of slavery in the Southwest. However, because of the importance of the holiday, it did not take long for Juneteenth celebrations to spread beyond the States in the Southwest and into other parts of the country. Today, due in large part to the hard work and dedication of individuals, like Lula Briggs Galloway and Dr. Ronald Meyer of the National Association of Juneteenth lineage, who have fought hard to revive and preserve the Juneteenth celebration, the holiday is celebrated by several million blacks and whites in more than 130 cities across the United States and Canada. In Texas and Oklahoma, Juneteenth is an official State holiday.

As we prepare to revitalize the observance of Juneteenth as the true day of independence for African-Americans, it is important that we acknowledge the historical as well as political significance of the celebration. We must acknowledge, for example, that while the slaves of Texas had cause to celebrate the news of their freedom on June 19, 1865, the truth is that at the time of General Granger's historical pronouncement, the slaves were already legally free. This is because the Emancipation Proclamation had become effective nearly 2½ years earlier—on January 1, 1863.

From a political standpoint, therefore, Juneteenth is significant because it exemplifies how harsh and cruel the consequences can be when a breakdown in communication occurs between the Government and the American people. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the dehumanizing and degrading conditions of slavery were unnecessarily prolonged for hundreds of thousands of black men, women, and children, because our American Government failed to communicate the truth.

As Juneteenth celebrations continue to spread, so does a greater appreciation of African-American history. We must revive and preserve Juneteenth not only as the end of a painful chapter in American history—but also as a reminder of the importance of preserving the lines of communication between the powerful and powerless in our society.

Juneteenth allows us to look back on the past with an increased awareness and heightened respect for the strength of the African-American men, women, and children, who endured unspeakable cruelties in bondage. Out of respect to our ancestors, upon whose blood, sweat, and tears, this great Nation was built, the bill I introduce today acknowledges that African-Americans in this country are not truly free, until the last of us are free.

The bill I introduce today, Mr. Speaker, recognizes June 19, 1865, as a day of celebrating the end of slavery in America and as the true day of independence for African-Americans in this country.

I ask all of my colleagues to cosponsor this bill.